United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General asks Sadruddin Aga Khan to go to Iraq to make new assessment of humanitarian situation in that country.

- Secretary-General appoints A.H.S. Ataul Karim of Bangladesh as Chief Liaison Officer and Head of United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia.

- Secretary-General urges parties in talks on El Salvador to exercise utmost caution in their public statements.

- General Assembly hears proposals for reorganizing United Nations relief efforts in response to natural and man-made disasters.

- Social Committee hears proposal by representative of Côte d'Ivoire to create fund against drug trafficking.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said in reply to questions by correspondents this morning that he had asked his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, to go to Iraq in order to make a new assessment of the humanitarian situation in that country.

The Secretary-General was replying to a question whether Sadruddin Aga Khan was going to Baghdad in the near future to renegotiate the agreement which permits the distribution of food and medicine and allows the presence of a United Nations security force.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was also asked about his views on Iraq's refusal to go ahead with the oil sale in order to increase international pressure for the lifting of the sanctions. He replied that Iraq would have to present its position to the Security Council which would then decide which action to take.

(more)

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The Secretary-General has appointed Mr. A.H.S. Ataul Karim as the Chief Liaison Officer and Head of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC).

Prior to his present appointment, Mr. Karim served from December 1987 to September 1991 as Bangladesh's Ambassador to the United States and, concurrently, from August 1988 to May 1990 as Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations.

A career diplomat, Mr. Karim has previously served as his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Offices in Geneva and Vienna.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that talks between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacion Nacional had resumed yesterday in Mexico City.

The spokesman told correspondents that the Secretary-General had urged the parties to exercise the "utmost circumspection in their public statements at this delicate stage in the negotiations". The Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Central America, Alvaro de Soto, who is attending the talks, had expressed hope that negotiations would continue extensively throughout the month, with only short breaks for consultations.

Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding had met last week with El Salvadoran President Christiani and the Minister of Defence for a discussion on cease-fire arrangements. Mr. Goulding would join the talks at the appropriate time, the spokesman said.

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The question of reorganizing United Nations emergency humanitarian relief systems and assigning the task of coordinating such efforts to a high-level Secretariat official was raised by several delegations, as the General Assembly this morning continued its debate on strengthening such international assistance.

The issue of national sovereignty was raised by several speakers who were concerned that humanitarian assistance could be used as a guise for political intervention. Proposals for improving efficiency in disaster relief were also examined, with some speakers suggesting that such improvements should take place in the context of overall United Nations administrative reform.

Among those addressing the Assembly, the representative of Canada, Yves Fortier, said his country endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendations that a $50 million fund be created to be replenished by the fund raised through a joint appeal under the authority of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO). Canada would support whatever method of financing would lead to the most rapid creation of the fund, either assessments or voluntary contributions.

The representative of Pakistan, Jamsheed K.A. Marker, said the most critical phase of an emergency was during the first few days. Pakistan supported initiatives which were aimed at reducing the response period of the United Nations to an emergency situation to the very minimum.

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The General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) heard yesterday a proposal for the establishment of an account to fight illicit trafficking by using illegal drug money which had been frozen in banks.

The proposal came from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Dienebou Kaba-Camara, who said the account should be similar to the one created by the Council to finance the humanitarian needs of Iraq.

She said Africa was becoming increasingly exposed to the drug problem due to changes in the location of centres of activities of drug traffickers. Africa needed greater attention on the part of the international community, to face that problem which was an addition to its already long list of problems, including political instability and civil wars.

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